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Card Not Accepted

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Card Not Accepted

Joslynn Howard

Waiting in line at the grocery store,
an infant (that drooling, cooing thing)
peers her sweet, darling face
over her mother's shoulder directly at me.

(The red ribbon, knotted
like a new shoelace in my abdomen,
loosens —

it begs for unravel.

So far, I've kept it secured around
my vacant womb, a nest of crimson
caution tape
signaling immense
danger ahead.

It keeps me orderly).

The mother turns, proffering a polite smile
in my direction. I cannot conceal my juvenile
amazement over such a tiny creature.

(I'm late for many things;
for class;
for practice;
for work;
for love.

I'm always too late.

Seconds slip out from under me.

Time, fickle as it is,
manages to keep me on a
loose schedule).

I place my box of tampons on the conveyor belt.

(My bodily clock works overtime
in order to stay on task with the
rigorous demands of life).

The infant coos, gurgling.

(I feel a tinge of awareness,
of sadness
for the inevitable unravel).